[*Translation*]

**Increase in the Prices of Edible Oils**

939. SHRI RAJVEER SINGH:
SHRI BALRAJ PASSI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of increase registred in the prices of edible oils and vegetable oils during the period from June, 1991 to November, 1991 and the reasons therefor;

(b) whether this price rise has been very high as compared to the price rise in the year 1989-90; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by the Government to control it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC DESTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) For the Week ending 9th November, 1991, the Wholesale Price Index No. of Edible Oils and Vegetable Oils has registered an increase of 7.2% and 8.8% respectively over the month of June, 91. The main factors contributing to the rise in prices of edible oils are general increase in Money-Supply, General Inflation coupled with gap between demand & supply because of limited import of edible oils.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Some of the steps taken by the Govt. to bring down the prices include granting of excise rebate on use of non-conventional oils in vanaspati, reduction of stock limits of edible oilseeds and oils by dealers/processors and manufacturer of all edible oils, permitting blending of conventional edible oils with non-conventional oils. The State Governments have also been asked to undertake strict action against hoarders, blackmarketeers in edible oilseeds and oils. Apart from this, Central Government has constituted a Cabinet Committee on Prices under the Chairmanship of Finance Minister for monitoring the prices of essential commodities and ensuring their supply. Edible oils have also been exempted from Railway freight hike proposed in the Railway Budget for 1991-92.

[*English*]

**Proposal for Ocean Bed Mining**

940. SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under consideration of the Government for Ocean-bed mining;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA): (a) India has a programme of developing a deep seabed test mining system In step with technological developments in other advanced countries and in view of its ready convertibility to a commercial system whenever the international market situation so demands.

(b) The deep seabed test mining project is being implemented by the Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute, Durgapur, as the nodal agency alongwith a large group of industries and R & D Centres in the country. The system would be progressively developed through various stages, from a land based shallow water facility to a low volume but fully operational deep seabed mining system at depths of 5 km.